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DHS to play Carnegie Hall



By JUSTIN GRAEBER, CLIPPER EDITOR
JUSTIN@DUXBURYCLIPPER.COM

Two groups of Duxbury High School musicians will achieve a feat reserved for a chosen few when they take the stage at New York's Carnegie Hall this week.

The school's string ensemble (50 students) and wind ensemble (63) have been selected to play as part of the National Invitational Band and Orchestra Festival.

Duxbury High School

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Katie Griffin, Maria Varonko and Buzz Ryan are among a group of Duxbury High School students headed to New York's Carnegie Hall this week.



The DHS Wind Ensemble recently performed during All States at Seaport Hotel and Convention Center. They will be heading to Carnegie Hall along with the string ensemble.

Student ensembles to play Carnegie Hall in New York

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is one of only 14 groups invited to play. The event is not a competition — the student ensembles sent in a tape to a panel of judges, and the privilege of playing on one of the most storied music stages in the country is its own reward.

"It's like the all star game," said senior trumpet player Buzz Ryan.

"Being able to play at Carnegie Hall is really special," said music teacher Jim Vinci. "I saw a lot of great players there ... I think it's inspirational for me as a teacher and for the students as well."

The ensembles will each play about four songs, or 30 minutes of music, and Duxbury's selections are mostly collegiate or high-level high school pieces.

The trip is the culmination of the musical careers for several seniors, whose musical lives began as fifth graders.

Ryan said he was drawn to the trumpet after hearing the braying horns in the Raiders of the Lost Ark theme.

"I thought that was the coolest thing," he said. "It's more like the instrument grabbed me."



Members of the string ensemble perform at a recent concert.

"Music is an outlet where I can just get away from everything," added clarinet player Katie Griffin.

Viola player Maria Varonko started playing her instrument when she wanted to join the school orchestra.

"I feel like it's a really awesome opportunity," she said of the Carnegie Hall trip.

For DHS students, the music program is an essential part of high school life. Vinci pointed out that 40 percent of high school students play an instrument, and said that his department has made every effort to reach out to kids who don't traditionally mix with

the band geeks, like athletes. (Griffin, for example, plays three sports.)

"It's taken years, now we have three bands at all different levels," Vinci said. "We have 100 string players in the high school. Most high schools are lucky to have 30."

And it's not just the students who are excited about the opportunity to play on the famous stage this week.

"Acoustically it's one of the greatest places to play," said Jill Norenberg. "How many people have stood on the podium I'm conducting on ... it's kind of overwhelming."